



POSTPARTUM GUIDELINES

Mom's recommended activity for the first week

- *Sleeping*
- *Eating*
- *Caring for baby*
- *Caring for self*
- *Accepting help*

Avoid prolonged periods on your feet, though daily short walks are helpful.

Avoid lifting more than the weight of the baby.

Allow yourself six weeks to heal before beginning abdominal toning, vigorous exercise, or sexual intercourse.

Food and Supplements

- *Eat healthy foods and keep high-sugar and caffeinated foods/drinks to a minimum*
- *Drink LOTS of fluids and eat raw fruits and veggies to prevent constipation*
- *No particular diet is recommended for breastfeeding, though many women find that fussy babies become calmer when moms avoid ALL dairy products*
- *Continue your prenatal vitamins and Omega-3s.*
- *Vitamin C 500 mg three times daily to help with wound healing and decrease risk of infection*
- *If you received antibiotics during labor, acidophilus/bifidus capsules are recommended to decrease risk of yeast (vaginitis in mom, thrush and diaper rash in baby) to self and baby*
- *Herbal stores carry teas designed to support postpartum healing and lactation. Check out www.wishgardenherbs.com for their lactation/postpartum herbs.*
- *For hemorrhoids, use "Hem-Mend" (a tincture that may be used orally or topically) and "Self-Heal" cream (from flower essences). Other options are Tucks hemorrhoidal ointment or pads; you may also request a prescription for stronger treatment.*
- *Red Raspberry Leaf helps decrease cramping and regulate bleeding, as do the herbs crampbark, black haw, motherwort and yarrow.*
- *Metamusil, senna and flax may help with constipation. Over-the-counter stool softeners are fine with breastfeeding.*

Lochia (Postpartum Bleeding)

- *Expect bleeding up to six weeks postpartum (usually only lasts a couple of weeks)*
- *The bleeding will be like a heavy period at first, then will gradually decrease*
- *Avoid use of tampons postpartum, as this increases your risk for Toxic Shock syndrome*
- *If your bleeding returns to bright red or heavier flow, your activity may be too much*

Abdominal Binder

Many women find abdominal support increases strength after delivery and may be helpful in healing muscle separations. One such brand is the “Loving Comfort” postpartum support belt. It may be purchased online or at Babies R Us. Another is “Better Binder”, which can be purchased online at www.coreproducts.com. We recommend wearing one for the first few weeks postpartum.

Perineal Wound Care

- *Squirt warm water over the urethra and perineum to decrease stinging with urination*
- *When having a bowel movement, you may want to apply counter-pressure to the stitches with a wad of toilet paper*
- *A sitz bath is a small tub that is placed on the toilet and circulates warm water. If you have stitches, you will find sitz baths lessen your discomfort and promote healing. Do this once or twice daily. You may also use your bathtub. You may purchase a pack of herbs from herbal stores designed for sitz baths, or you can make your own “tea” for the bath from rosemary (antiseptic and reduces swelling) and/or salt. (Take the leaves out before using the “tea”)*
- *Stitches usually dissolve by the end of one week so you may notice strings pulling away from the area*

Breastfeeding

- *Frequent feeding and skin-to-skin contact help establish milk supply*
- *Baby should feed at least eight times in a 24-hour period (after the first 24 hours)*
- *Point your nipple to the baby’s nose when latching to help the baby position well under the areola (the dark area around the nipple)*
- *Expect your milk to come in on the 3rd or 4th day postpartum*
- *Engorgement may occur when your milk comes in; massage, frequent nursing, warm showers, cabbage leaf (see below) and ibuprofen may be helpful.*
- *Breast infections sometimes develop several months into nursing. The breast would be red, swollen and tender, and flu-like symptoms may also occur. If you think you are developing an infection, try these remedies early in the process:*
 - *Spread a lightly-cooked cabbage leaf over the breast 20 minutes, four times daily*
 - *Homeopathic remedies bryonia and phytolaca; alternate these, taking one dose every 30 minutes*

- Increase rest
- Frequent nursing on infected breast
- Warm shower to breasts
- Ibuprofen

If your symptoms worsen, call your midwife.

Third Day Woes

Usually the breastmilk arrives on the third day postpartum. The associated hormonal changes combined with fatigue and life adjustments often result in maternal crying spells on this day. It is a good day to check in with your midwife. Realize that this is a normal transition and try to rest and receive extra pampering.

BREASTFEEDING RESOURCES:

*www.breastfeedingonline.com
www.drjacknewman.com
www.breastfeedingmadesimple.com*

*Renee Beebe, Med, IBCLC – (206)356-7252. Home visits for lactation consultation or postpartum doula support. Insurance may cover part of the fee.
www.second9months.com*

*Birth and Beyond Breastfeeding Support – (206)615-8078. Free telephone counseling for breastfeeding concerns; home visits also available for a fee. Insurance may cover part. Also a “Breastfeeding 911” class is offered weekly (Fridays) in which latch is observed by a trained consultant.
www.birhandbeyond.com*

La Leche League – (206)522-1336. Mother-to-mother support for breastfeeding women; local groups available. www.llli.org

Swedish Outpatient Lactation Clinic – (206)386-3740. Offers drop-in breastfeeding support group at Swedish Ballard campus weekly (Wednesdays). Fee is \$10 or medical coupon. Clinic at Capitol Hill site is open weekdays and offers private appointments.

POSTPARTUM MOOD SUPPORT

Postpartum Support International – 1-888-404-PPMD. Free telephone counseling with professional referrals available. Learn more about postpartum mood disorders at www.ppm-support.com

www.speakup.wa.gov – resource listing of books and local support

“This is Not What I Expected” - The group meets twice each month and is free. Call the Evergreen Postpartum Care Center, (425)899-3602.

“Understanding the Moods of Motherhood” – This group meets at Swedish Hospital (Room 718 Heath Bldg) each Monday, 4-5:30p. Free drop-in group with facilitators. (206)551-4824

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR NEW PARENTS

*Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS) – www.pepsgroup.org
Connect with other new parents for local community support.*

*“Bringing Baby Home” classes – (learn more at PEPs site noted above)
Based on the research of Drs. John and Julie Gottman, this is a 12-hour, two-day workshop for expectant couples and parents of young children. This is designed to provide knowledge and skills that will strengthen your relationship and teach you to interact with your baby in a sensitive and responsive manner.*

First Weeks – This class is held at Birth and Beyond twice weekly for new parents and their babies. Discuss breastfeeding, sleeping patterns and other issues with Ann Keppler, RN, MN and co-author of “Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Newborn”. \$10 suggested donation. www.birthandbeyond.com. (206)324-4831.

POSTPARTUM WARNING SIGNS

CALL YOUR MIDWIFE IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- *Fever over 100.4*
- *If your bleeding soaks more than 1 pad every hour*
- *If your bleeding remains heavy after 2 days*
- *If you have passed a blood clot larger than a golf ball more than once*
- *If you have flu-like symptoms the first weeks after birth (body aches, fever, feeling generally ill)*
- *If a perineal wound is becoming more painful each day, not less*
- *If you have a sharp pain up the back of your calf when your foot is flexed, accompanied by tenderness or swelling on the same calf*
- *If you are crying more than your baby*
- *If you are unable to sleep or relax because you are anxious or worried (particularly about baby's health)*

NORMAL NEWBORN TRAITS

- *Sneezing and coughing first days after birth*
- *Sticky black stool (meconium), transitioning to squirty, yellow, “seedy” stool. (Olive oil on the bum helps meconium cleanup!)*
- *Spit-up first day or two, may look brown or contain a small amount bright red blood (coming from cracked nipples).*
- *Blue-ish hands and feet*
- *Irregular respiratory rate*
- *Very sleepy first day (call your midwife if this is making feeding difficult after first 24 hours).*
- *Baby girls may have small amount of vaginal bleeding or leaking of milk from nipples caused by withdrawal from mom’s hormones*
- *Orange spots in diaper*

*Your baby should be having **at least** as many wet diapers as days old he/she is. This starts after the first 24 hours. I.e., there should be at least one wet diaper on day 1, two on day 2, etc. Typically babies will have 6-8 wet diapers daily after the first week. If your baby is meeting this criteria, it typically means the baby is getting enough breastmilk.*

Your baby will need screening for metabolic diseases (“PKU test”) twice. The first screen is done within the first 3 days after birth. The second is typically done around 10 days in the pediatric provider’s office. If your pediatric provider does not offer this second screen, you may contact your midwife to schedule this second test.